



# DEBRA BOWEN

## CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

**DB08:041**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Secretary of State Debra Bowen Announces Military and Overseas Voter Ballots Available 60 Days Before Statewide Direct Primary Election**

**SACRAMENTO** – Secretary of State Debra Bowen today reminded military and overseas voters that county elections officials are preparing their vote-by-mail ballots for mailing.

County elections officials may begin mailing ballots to the more than 60,000 registered California voters serving in the armed forces or living abroad 60 days before any statewide election.

To qualify as a military or overseas voter in California elections, a voter must be:

- A member of the United States (U.S.) armed forces or an auxiliary branch;
- A U.S. citizen temporarily living outside U.S. territorial limits or the District of Columbia;
- A person living on a merchant vessel documented under U.S. law; or
- A spouse or dependent of a member of the U.S. military or an auxiliary branch.

“Thousands of Californians will be overseas on Election Day – whether they’re serving their country in the military or the Peace Corps, or simply living abroad,” said Secretary Bowen, the state’s chief elections officer. “Just because some California voters aren’t in the state on Election Day doesn’t mean they can’t make their voices heard.”

More than six million Americans who live overseas or serve in the military face unique challenges when voting because states and the federal government have a variety of rules for registering to vote and casting ballots by mail, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Overseas Vote Foundation.

California military and overseas voters may use a Federal Post Card Application to simultaneously register to vote and request a vote-by-mail ballot. California law also allows voters to request vote-by-mail ballots from, and return them to, county elections officials by fax.

These voters generally vote on a user-friendly ballot that allows them to simply write in their preferred candidates and offices sought, and their yes or no votes on propositions.

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The Secretary of State's office has a dedicated email address that links military and overseas voters from across the globe to staffers who can offer additional assistance at [mov@sos.ca.gov](mailto:mov@sos.ca.gov). More resources are available from the Overseas Vote Foundation at [www.overseasvotefoundation.org](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org).

To download a copy of the Federal Post Card Application or for more information about military and overseas voting, go to [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_mov.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_mov.htm).

The last day to register to vote in the statewide direct primary is May 19. The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is May 26.

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